

Interview with Kazimir Ladny
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Interviewer: Mark DePue

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Ladny: This was very scary situation, because from Poland we were receiving letters. The Germans are rounding up many people for one reason or another and they are taking them to the woods and they kill them off. They execute them. At one time they surrounded us and they were leading us to the woods. So we thought that this is going to be the end.

DePue: Do you know how many were in your group, roughly?

Ladny: Oh, maybe fifty. So we thought they'll take care of us in the woods. We were surrounded with machine guns from all sides. So anyway we were prepared for the execution. It was not easy. But we didn't have any choice. But then they brought us into the forest, but first two trucks and one car were passing us by. We had to make room for them to pass us by. We didn't know what was in there. When we stopped in the forest we saw through the bushes some motion over there, something is going on. We thought maybe they are digging a ditch for mass grave for us.

So we were waiting for whatever comes. But after a while they called us to bring them over here. So these SS who were watching us, they took us through the bushes to that place and there was a big oak tree and the trucks were standing right close to that. And there were three men hanging from the oak tree branch. And this SS, he was in charge; he made a speech that we are a noble race here, Germans. And you Poles, you are just dirty dogs and so on and so on. "Now," he said, "you know that you are not allowed to touch a German woman. Because by touching her you would contaminate her. Now," he said, "look at that. We didn't have to bring you here as prisoner of war. We had the order to kill of you as many as we could and as we wanted, but we didn't. We saved your life. We brought you here. But we didn't bring you here to fool around with our women. Our women, they have brothers, they have boyfriends, and some who are married, they have husbands, and so on. They are in uniform on the frontline somewhere, and they want to have their women safe. So now, look

what happens to you if you try to get intimate with German women. We won't cut them off. We'll take the ropes off very gently and we'll be holding this rope for any one of you, if you dare."

DePue: So an experience like that, you have to be incredibly relieved, because you thought you were going off into the woods to be executed, but overwhelmed by the message they delivered nonetheless, I would think.

Ladny: Yeah, yeah, just what I said. My life was horrific and terrific. And, oh yeah we can go home now. Yeah, but this was terrific.